

light and who protected our Native indigenous language.

For Native Hawaiians and so many other indigenous peoples, our language is essential for our people to live and thrive. In fact, we have an 'Olelo No'eau, a proverb, that says: "I ka 'olelo no ke ola; I ka 'olelo no ka make." "In the language rests life; in the language rests death."

Established in 1840, Hawaii's public education system is the oldest west of the Mississippi. In fact, in the 19th century, Hawaii was one of the most literate nations in the world, with over 90 percent of the population able to read and write.

January 17, 1893, is a date that is etched in the consciousness of almost every Hawaiian, the day the Hawaiian Kingdom was overthrown. At the time of the overthrow, our language was used in all sectors of society by all of the kingdom's citizens, from our homes and schools to businesses and government, and even the halls of justice.

In 1896, just 3 years after the overthrow, a law was enacted that stated: "The English language shall be the medium and basis of instruction in all public and private schools."

That one sentence dealt a smothering blow to our language. If you want to extinguish a people, you extinguish their language by taking it from the ears and mouths of future generations. You take it away from their children.

Piece by piece, action by action, the racist provisional and republic government and others with influence attempted to stem the flow of oxygen to our 'olelo Hawaii. But they could not extinguish our fire.

While Hawaiian was relegated to use in isolated spaces, even perhaps to whispers in private, we spoke, and we spoke in Hawaiian. We kept the embers burning for nearly a century.

How do you revive a language? The same way they tried to extinguish it. We share it with our children. Fire-keepers started private preschool language nests, or Punana Leo, and in 1978, Hawaiian became an official language of the State. But it would take 100 years to change that 1896 law banning Hawaiian in schools when, in 1986, K-12 Hawaiian language immersion was reestablished in Hawaii's Department of Education.

These early language pioneers continued to rebuild the fire, step by step, action by action. By the 1980s, we graduated our first bachelor's degrees in Hawaiian language. From less than 50 Native speakers under the age of 18 to more than 25,000 now self-identifying as Hawaiian language speakers today, our fire still burns, and it is growing.

It is no longer novel to hear Hawaiian spoken in our local coffee shops and our grocery stores, and my family proudly joins along fellow fire-keepers to stoke the 'olelo Hawaii flame, as my daughters attend Hawaiian language schools Punana Leo 'O Hilo and Ke Kula 'o Nawahiokalani'opu'u.

While I am filled with pride, Mr. Speaker, it comes with a mix of other

emotions: disappointment at underfunding; frustration at the lack of equity in government use of Hawaiian as an official language; and trepidation, knowing how close we came to having our language snuffed out.

While I am encouraged by our progress, I know there is more work ahead. We must continue to raise up the languages of all of America's first peoples.

UNESCO states that a third of the world languages have fewer than 1,000 speakers left. Language is essential to cultural diversity, and diversity is essential to our shared humanity.

While Mahina 'Olelo Hawaii, or our month of celebrating Hawaiian language, is coming to a close, we will continue to stoke the flames of 'olelo Hawaii month by month, year by year, generation to generation because, Mr. Speaker, "I ka 'olelo no ke ola; I ka 'olelo no ka make." "In the language rests life; in the language rests death," and our resolve is greater than ever to ensure that our languages will live on.

"E Ola Mau Ka 'Olelo Hawaii a me na 'Olelo 'O'iwi A Pau Loa." "The Hawaiian language, and all indigenous languages, shall live." Mahalo.

□ 1045

REMEMBERING WILLIAM "WILL" HOWARD INGRAM II

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. CARTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and honor a great Georgian and a great American, William "Will" Howard Ingram II of Richmond Hill, who tragically passed away at the age of 43.

Will lived a successful life and began his career in the military after remarkably receiving appointments to all three of the United States service academies. He was a 1999 graduate of West Point.

After he honorably served his country as an Army officer, Will went on to earn a graduate degree from the University of Washington. Following his Active Duty service, he went on to serve his country as an Army civilian for over 15 years.

During that time, he served as the chief of master planning for the Army's 3rd Infantry Division for several years before he took on responsibility as the chief of operation and maintenance at Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield.

Among all of his many accomplishments, Will was most proud of his son, Gabe.

My thoughts and prayers are with his family, friends, and all who knew him, during this most difficult time.

RECOGNIZING SHERIFF CLYDE SMITH

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the longest-serving public servant in Bryan County and a great American. Longtime Bryan County Sheriff Clyde

Smith recently retired after more than 54 years in law enforcement.

Sheriff Smith's exceptional career was highlighted when he was presented with the key to the city of Richmond Hill by Mayor Russ Carpenter. The key to the city is the highest honor Richmond Hill can give, and it was presented in recognition of Sheriff Smith's honest and faithful service to the citizens of Richmond Hill and Bryan County.

Sheriff Smith began his career in law enforcement in Savannah, Georgia, and he positively impacted every resident and business owner there from the start. He is a man marked by his bravery and compassion, and he is the epitome of a dedicated public servant.

I would like to express my appreciation for the work Sheriff Smith did throughout his career, and I wish him the best as he begins his retirement.

HONORING BETTY MINER

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember and honor Betty Miner of Richmond Hill, who, sadly, passed away at the age of 87.

Betty lived a remarkable life and touched countless lives. She was a lifelong resident of Richmond Hill and became the first woman council member for the city in 1971. Betty also served as mayor pro tem.

In addition to her work to lead and improve Richmond Hill, she served on the DNR board for the State of Georgia, for which she was instrumental in bringing the fisherman's co-op to Bryan County.

Through every position she had, she worked to better her community and every life she touched.

My thoughts and prayers go out to her family, friends, and all who knew her, during this most difficult time.

RECOGNIZING FORD AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Ford Avenue Historic District in an officially designated area in the city of Richmond Hill.

After 2 years of planning, the Richmond Hill City Council approved an amendment to an ordinance creating the city's first historic district on January 5.

The Ford Avenue Historic District is at the heart of Richmond Hill's history and contains primary locations and buildings Ford Motor Company built between 1925 and 1947.

When Henry Ford came to Richmond Hill, the town was known as Ways Station. Upon his arrival, the town grew and become known as Richmond Hill. You can feel the history simply walking down the street.

Mr. Speaker, designating this remarkable historic district is just another positive effort by the city to promote, protect, and remember its roots. I am thankful for the Richmond Hill City Council's diligent work on this and everything they do.

DENOUNCING HATE CRIMES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from